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IS COMPENSATORY EDUCATION ONLY PALLIATIVE.

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THIS REBUTTAL TO AN ARTICLE ARGUING THAT COMPENSATORY EDUCATION TREATS ONLY THE RESULTS AND NOT THE CAUSES OF DISADVANTAGEMENT MAINTAINS THAT THE SCHOOL PROGRAMS NEVERTHELESS ARE INSTRUMENTAL IN IMPROVING PROBLEMATIC SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. IT POINTS OUT THAT ALTHOUGH AN UNHEALTHY NATIONAL ECONOMY CAN CAUSE MUCH INDIVIDUAL POVERTY AND MISERY, NATIONAL GROWTH AND PROSPERITY WILL NOT NECESSARILY HELP THE REALLY HARD-CORE POOR. IN ORDER FOR THEM TO RISE FROM POVERTY, THEY FIRST NEED SUCH HELP AS CAN BE GIVEN THROUGH SPECIAL READING, COUNSELING, JOB TRAINING, AND HEALTH PROGRAMS. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN THE "PHI DELTA KAPPAN," VOLUME 47, NUMBER 2, OCTOBER 1965. (LB)

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EDITORIAL

Is Compensatory Education Only Palliative?

FOR the editor to jump into the ring where he is supposed to be refereeing violates most of the rules, but this time the temptation is too great.

In this issue of the KAPPAN, which is especially concerned with compensatory education and attendant problems, Ernest Austin suggests that most U.S. projects for the poverty-stricken and culturally deprived are designed to alleviate "results," and seldom get at causes. He says these causes lie somewhere "out there" in the social, political, and economic environment and that educators are generally unwilling to face this fact and its implications.

Mr. Austin is obviously an incipient reconstructionist in education of the Brameld stripe, although he never goes so far as to say exactly how educators can effect important change in the non-school environment. In this respect he lacks the "audacity" for which Brameld argues and pleads. In one of the three books he has published this year (they will be reviewed in the November KAPPAN), Brameld says, "The leader must be capable of envisioning the role that education plays in shaping the future of humanity, and thus of picturing as graphically as possible the kind of civilization that we are now capable of constructing upon earth." Brameld would be very unhappy with a remark attributed to David Seeley, head of the new Office of Equal Educational Opportunity, USOE: "Remember, the schools don't run the country; the country runs the schools."

Historically, educators who are led to conjecture deeply and seriously about causes of the human failures they face daily in the school, if they are of both activist and utopian bent, sometimes turn to politics. Horace Mann is the first example that comes to mind. The truths such impatient idealists discover in social psychology, cultural anthropology, and political science lead them inevitably to government, where law can be shaped and in turn can shape people. For law does shape people—witness the "new man" of Communist Russia—and education implements law.

There is just a hint in Mr. Austin's argument that it is useless to tinker with such palliatives as compensatory education because the whole social-political-economic system is inadequate.

Well, is it or isn't it?

This is of course the great open question of our age. Educators *do* need to face it, and they desperately need the freedom to face it. That is probably as far as "activism" need go for many of us, for opening curtains and removing blinders is perhaps the most important and courageous act an individual can perform in any society.

MR. Austin is quite correct in saying that compensatory education is of secondary importance when compared with other factors tending to alleviate human misery. This does not mean it is unimportant.

One of the most stimulating short articles we have read this year* has to do with the relative importance of the government's fiscal and monetary policies and its retraining, poverty, and distressed-area programs. The conclusion was that an increase of one percentage point in the national rate of economic growth, which the government can control, solves far more problems than all these programs put together. This is not to oppose the programs aimed at tackling the special cases, but to put them in perspective.

Let us quote selected items from Mr. Dale's article:

> One of the interesting things about the American economy—really the American society—is that practically nobody will believe some of the main facts about it. For example, if you would like to make your friends' eyes pop, tell them that:
>
> ► During the past two years, the largest growth in jobs has been among the Negroes, the unskilled, and the teen-agers.
>
> ► Jobs have increased rapidly in the very places where the great bogey, automation, was supposed to cause trouble. Manufacturing jobs are up. Clerical jobs are up. Transport jobs are up. Warehouse jobs are up. Unskilled jobs are up.
>
> ► By the test of income, 450,000 families moved out of the poverty class last year, almost none of them touched by the poverty program.
>
> ► There has been a reduction of a half million in the adult long-term, or chronically, unemployed (coal miners, etc.), not more than a tenth of whom have been touched by retraining programs. . . .
>
> We read about the problem of the high school dropout—the modern-day "Okie." Like the Okies, it is real. But the fact is that the vast majority, skilled or unskilled, of the high school dropouts now get jobs, though not necessarily well-paying jobs. They get them thanks almost entirely to general prosperity rather than to special programs. . . .
>
> According to a current joke in Washington, one man asks another how the President is to pay for the big expansion in domestic programs, from education to conservation, in his budget. The answer comes back, "How old-fashioned you are. Out of

* "The Big Gun on Poverty," by Edwin L. Dale, Jr. Aug. 7, 1965. *New Republic.*

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tax cuts, of course!" The joke tells a truth—a truth not easy to grasp. It tells the difference between an expansionary fiscal policy and an orthodox, or restrictive, fiscal policy. . . .

A policy of general and totally impersonal stimulation of what economists call aggregate demand through fiscal and monetary policy, when such stimulus is needed, has been and will be the *big* weapon against human misery in this country and in this economy. The Hellers and the Ackleys with their manipulation of the Gross National Product have improved far more human individual situations, if almost unwittingly, than the Wirtzes and the Shrivers with their effort to reach individuals.

Mr. Dale is no doubt right in most respects. However, Mr. Heller at least was not unaware of both the possibilities and limitations of a tax cut. He says: "We [the Council of Economic Advisers] concluded that even though the tax cut would create between two and three million new jobs, even though it would open up exits from poverty, the difficulty is that there are millions of people who can't use those exits, who can't move into new jobs." For Heller, that was the key conclusion. "These millions are caught in the web of poverty through illiteracy, lack of skills, racial discrimination, broken homes, ill health. These are conditions that are hardly touched by prosperity and growth. These are conditions which call for a specially focused and specially designed program."**

Mr. Dale concluded his article thus:

Both groups [the Heller-Ackleys and the Wirtz-Schrivers] are sturdy warriors in the battle for a better society. But anyone who wants a good life for those left behind in America had best keep his eye first on the GNP.

While he is keeping his eye on the GNP, the audacious educator must keep his hand on the throttle of the schools, which, as James Guthrie and James Kelly point out in their reply to Mr. Austin in this KAPPAN, remain a primary vehicle for the improvement of undesirable social and economic conditions.—SME

**See the excellent articles on the war on poverty in the Sept. 13 *Newsweek*.

Massachusetts Bans *De Facto* Desegregation

► Massachusetts became the first state to ban *de facto* segregation when Governor John Volpe signed a bill in August requiring local school authorities to correct "racial imbalance." Imbalance exists, according to the law, if more than 50 per cent of the enrollment in a school is nonwhite (but not vice versa). There must be an annual head count to check the balance. In cases of imbalance, state aid must be cut off.

A district with such an imbalanced school can either redraw its lines to break up neighborhood racial pockets, build more schools, or bus children to other schools. No families, however, can be compelled to have their children transported out of their neighborhood if the parents object in writing.

Early Results of Civil Rights Title VI Enforcement by USOE

► The penalty for racial discrimination in federally aided school districts is loss of federal assistance, according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Office of Equal Educational Opportunity in the U.S. Office of Education was established to administer that part of the law in federally financed education programs.

By September 10 it was clear that Title VI was having a profound impact upon segregation in the South. There was more desegregation than in all the eleven years since the Supreme Court declared segregation unconstitutional. Here is what the Office of Equal Opportunity reported on September 10:

Out of 5,044 school districts in the seventeen Southern and border states, 2,785 had given assurance of compliance ("we do not discriminate; we are desegregated"). Another 1,965 had submitted desegregation plans, of which 1,605 had been accepted by the USOE as of September 10. Another 126 were provisionally accepted, leaving a backlog of 234 on which the office was then working. Director David Seeley reported that about seventy districts failed to communicate with the Office of Equal Educational Opportunity before the target date of August 31. By the end of September these districts were expected to get notices of opportunity for a hearing in Washington on their reasons for noncompliance.

The law requires followup reports on the pledges of compliance as well as declarations of intent. These reports must indicate the number of Negro and white students attending each school.

The Equal Opportunity Office is now entering a new stage of operation during which it will beef up its investigative staff. This staff will investigate complaints of individuals and groups and seek voluntary compliance. If that is not forthcoming, a hearing procedure has been carefully laid out in the law. Its final step, if necessary, is judicial review.

Jack Nelson of the *Los Angeles Times*, in a report filed from Atlanta in late August, said that hundreds of districts are defying or evading the intent of the Civil Rights Act. "Tokenism and outright evasion," he said, " . . . are apparent in hundreds of districts that have submitted desegregation plans approved by the U.S. Office of Education. Most of the evasion is accomplished through 'Freedom of Choice' plans that don't live up to the name." These plans have the effect of putting the burden of desegregation on Negro parents. Nelson noted that most of the districts not submitting plans or indicating any intention of complying are in rural areas of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

During the 1964-65 school year only 66,135 or 2.25 per cent of the 2,943,000 Negroes in eleven Southern states attended public schools with whites. While the number may double this fall, that still leaves 95 per cent of the Negro students in Deep South states in fact segregated.